

REMARKS

Present Status of the Application

The Office Action rejects claims 7-8, 10-16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Higuma et al. (US 6,224,200 B1). The Office Action also objects claim 9 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim (claim 7), but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Response to Rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 7-8, 10-16 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Higuma et al. (US 6,224,200 B1), and objects claim 9. Applicants respectively transverse the rejection as it applied to claims 7-8, 10-16 for at least the reasons set forth below.

The independent claim 7 recites as follows.

7. An ink storage unit, comprising:

an ink tank, defining an inner confinement space limited by at least an inner sidewall, and further provided with an air inlet and an ink outlet, the air inlet enabling an external air to enter the confinement space and the ink outlet enabling an ink to be outputted out of the confinement space; and

an ink storage body, received within the confinement space, the ink storage body being comprised of:

a first ink storage portion, placed approximately close to the air inlet;

a second ink storage portion, placed approximately close to the ink outlet; and

a spacing member, placed between the first and second ink storage portions to separate the first ink storage portion from the second ink storage portion.

(Emphasis added in bold)

Apparently, in the claim invention, the spacing member 222c is placed between the first and second ink storage portions 222a & 222b to prevent the backflow of the ink toward the air inlet 216. Specifically, the spacing member 222c separating the first ink storage portion 222a from the second ink storage portion 222b is used to cut off the continuity of the interfaces 230 to prevent ink leakage through the air inlet 216 (see Fig. 3). There is no direct contact between the first and second ink storage portions 222a & 222b.

However, the Office Action, Page 3 Lines 1-3, indicates that the ink chambers c & b are placed between the foamed block F and the foamed block F_B to separate the foamed block F from the foamed block F_B (see figs. 39, 40, 43). It should be noted that the foamed block F has an extended portion (or a branch) which extends through the bottom of the ink chambers c & b and directly contacts the bottom of the foamed block F_B such that the foamed blocks F_B & F are not completely separated by the ink chambers c & b. Since the foamed block F has an extended portion (or a branch) that directly contacts the bottom of the foamed block F_B , **the ink may flows from the foamed block F through the extended portion of the foamed block F to the foamed block F_B , and there may be ink leakage from the air inlet 503.**

Therefore, Higuma et al. do not anticipate claim 7, since the features of independent claim 7 are not disclosed by Higuma et al. Consequently, Higuma et al. do not anticipate

dependent claims 8, 10-17 as a matter of law. Besides, since the base claim (independent claim 7) is not anticipated by Higuma et al., claim 9 should not be objected without being rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that the grounds of rejection have been addressed and the rejection has been overcome. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

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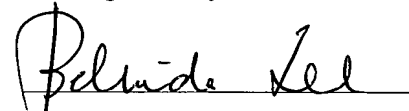
CONCLUSION

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is believed that the pending claims 7-17 are in proper condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference would expedite the examination of the above-identified patent application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,


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